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POEMS OF LIFE

BY VIDA MUNDEN

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Respectfully dedicated
to
my first teacher,
R. H. HIGGINS.

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Vida Munden.

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IF WE ONLY KNEW

If we only knew
And justly would compare
The weight of our own burdens
With those that others bear,
Oft' we'd overtake a brother
Burdened with a heavy load,
And would think our burdens lighter
When we'd helped him o'er life's road.

If we only knew
And would with others share
Their gladness and their sorrow,
Their freedom and their care,
Life would be as radiant sunshine,
Growing brighter all the while;
Then we'd love each other better
And would smile a sweeter smile.

If we only knew
The crosses others bear,
Only knew their humble spirits
As they bow in secret prayer,
Perhaps we'd search ourselves more closely
For the faults that dwell within
And would judge our friends less harshly
When we'd found the hidden sin.

If we only knew
The danger of sin's snare,
We would see with eyes more watchful
And of its fatal clutch beware;
And if we knew that close behind us
Our loved ones would our steps pursue,
We would ever be more careful—
Yes, if then we only knew.

EXCELSIOR

Into the zenith far above—
That holy realm of boundless love—
The star decked region of the sky,
I gaze, I wonder as I lie
And count the bright, celestial gems
That deck earth's royal diadem;
But ere I 've counted, in twinkles bright,
These innumerable meteors all unite
And form one grand, ethereal mound
Eternal, endless, without bound.

Such peaks, such crags I visualize
In the mountain regions of the skies
That through life, then death our souls might
climb
To attain the heights of bliss sublime

And ne'er a summit could we see
In this endless bliss of eternity;
For no bound can mark the heights of love
Nor mete the joy of heaven above.

Up higher—higher—higher still!
O Heart! within love's raptures thrill!
O guide me on, thou tiny star,
Straight to the gate that stands ajar.—
Inspire me, lead me by thy light;
Gleam thou upon me through the night
Until my bosom swells with love
Divinely perfect as above.

ENDURANCE

Thorns grow among sweet roses
Whose fragrance fill the air,
The faces of bright posies
Are not forever fair;
There are sorrows mingled with gladness—
Joys only last for a while,
And then there comes a sadness—
But after all, breaks a smile.

There are cloudy days, dark and dreary,
There are chilling nights of gloom;
There are times when the heart is weary
And the soul seems far from Home—

The rains come down from heaven
And darken the zenith above.—
The heart is cleansed—we're forgiv'n,
Then shines the sunlight of love.

Should the year be all of summer,
There would be no hope for the spring;
Could a mortal heart ne'er murmur,
The soul would never sing.
Bright tints of vegetation
Shoot from the dark, cold sod;
So, from earthly habitation,
The soul looks up to God.

To shadows the sunbeams dance sprightly,
The nightingale sings through the night;
In the gloom a torch shines most brightly:
No darkness—no hope for the light,
So be patient, soul, in thy living;
Through death thine endurance shall shine;
Though 'mid thorns, thy beauty be giving
Like the rose, spread thy fragrance sublime.

IF

If you begin in life's dark vale
To climb Mount Zion's summit,
Then when into sin's gorge you fall,
By struggling, you overcome it;

If alone you tread along life's road,
A heavy burden bearing,
Then, weary, help a brother too,
His weight of sorrow sharing ;
Or if you aim at lofty mark
And, failing, aim still higher ;
If you can stand with steady faith
And speechless, daunt the liar ;
If you can build a tower high
And yet in heart be humble,
Then see it fall, rebuild its walls,
Nor shriek to hear it tumble ;
If you can smile at poverty's grin
Or laugh at misfortune's scorning ;
If the ache from the thorn of grief you soothe
Through your hope for the rose of morning ;
If you can tune your heart to sing
Sweet songs when it is breaking ;
If you have courage to endure
Distress when your nerves are quaking ;
If you can stand when comrades fall,
The banner of constancy waving,
Firm, undaunted, for justice and law,
Throughout the battle you're braving,
When "Victory!" is echoed far away,
If in the end you've won it,
Then count yourself a hero brave
And tell the world you've done it.

TRUE GREATNESS

There are actions prompted by duty;
There are motives prompted by love;
 The life we live
 Is the deed we give
To the God of heaven above.

There are proud hearts thirsty for greatness;
There are those who vain riches seek;
 But heaven's dews fall
 Upon the simple—the small—
The lowly—the humble—the meek.

There are pleasures that last for a season,
And treasures—yea, great hoards of gold;
 But the cost of good name
 Is not fortune or fame,
But the heart of rich secrets untold.

SONG OF SERVICE

'Tis better to serve than be served,
And better to give than receive—
 Just simply to say
 In a humble way,
“Here am I, dear Lord, I believe.”

'Tis better to trust, having faith,
With a constant hope ever bright,
 Than gain the world
 When the soul is hurled
Into the ravines of night.

The peasant who toils sings a song;
The king on his throne bows in care;—
 'Tis noble to live
 When service we give—
Submissive, abiding in prayer.

DEVOTION

Into every life it steals,
Unto every heart appeals—
This, God's gift of sacred love,
Handed down from heaven above—
 True devotion.

'Tis the unity of bliss,
Atmosphere of holiness,
Peaceful state in which to live,
Precious gift that hearts may give—
 True devotion.

'Tis a grand, ennobling trait,
Man to God it doth relate,
Binding in affection's ties
Earthly kindred to the skies—
True devotion.

MAKE LIFE WORTH WHILE

Make life worth while!
Treat it with a high regard,
Not as something to discard,
Let it not by sin be marred—
Keep it pure.

Make life worth while!
Keep it free from sin's vile stain,
To its highest aims attain,
Count it not as something vain,
But worth while.

Make life worth while!
Something worthy of a price,
Bought by self's own sacrifice,
Let its virtues know no vice—
Keep it clean.

Make life worth while!
Keep it ever clean and pure,
Brave its battles and endure
And its crown you will procure
After while.

THE WATER LILY

On the bosom of the river
A little flower grew,
A little lily, white and fair,
No blight its beauty knew.

In the splendor of its beauty,
With petals open wide,
The lily grew while there reposing
On the bosom of the tide.

And a fragrant little flower
Was this lily, white and fair,
Sending forth across the water
Scents of sweetness in the air.

But alas! its petals shedded
As it withered with decay,
And the river that had blessed it
Bore its scattered form away.

So with life, my friend, we're living
On the bosom of its tide;
Though we be not pure as lilies,
Like fragrance, mission spreads out wide.

And when old age life's youth shall wither,
When like the lily we decay,
Then the God who long hath blessed us
Will our spirits bear away.

THE RIPPLING BROOK

“O thou tiny, rippling brook,
Rushing so swiftly by,
Why dost thou run so cheerfully,
Never stopping to sigh ?

“Dost thou never weary grow
Of running all the day ?
How strange that you should always run
And never stop to play.”

“Come, go with me, my little maid,
For I have no time to stay ;
Just follow me and a lesson learn
As we journey on the way.”

So on and on the tiny stream ran,
But the gay little maiden stayed;
Its wild, ceaseless journey it still pursued
As on she busily played.

“Though a small, rippling streamlet, a pond you
can fill;
By your power a great mill is turned.”
Such were the thoughts of the inspired youth
And this is the lesson she learned:

That whatever our mission, some good we can do,
Though to us the deeds may seem small;
We too, may, by littles, in our own feeble way
Thus willingly help the great all.

JUST A TINY SEED

‘Tis so simple, indeed—
Just a dry little seed,
But strange when we learn all about it;
Just to beat up a clod
Of earth’s fertile sod,
Then plant it and see nature sprout it.

It bursts forth in sight
To the air and sunlight
And raindrops upon it patter;
Then later 'twill be
A great fruitful tree
And seed of its own fruit scatter.

So it is with a deed
Just as with the seed—
If we plant it as through life we're sowing,
Into life it will sprout
And toward heaven peep out
And keep growing—and growing—and growing.

THE FOUR SEASONS

Springtime came and brought forth leaves
To clothe the naked forest trees
And filled the air with sweet perfume
Of fragrant flowers in their bloom.
Just o'er the woodland hill was heard
The song of the merry mocking bird.

The sunbeams danced, the days were warm,
The busy bees began to swarm,
And in the gladness of the spring
New life was in most everything;
But summer, **with** its golden rays,
Brought changes to the fleeting days.

Bursting buds into leaves had grown,
Wee birdies from their nests had flown;
The beautiful flowers that bloomed in May
Had everyone withered and faded away,
While new ones peeped through the sparkling dew
As if the glories of morning to view.

Ripe fruit bent low the orchard bowers
That were in spring adorned with flowers
Tiny seeds, in springtime sown,
Had then into rich harvests grown,
And autumn, with its sickle, came
To harvest in the golden grain.

In the season's sunny glow
The golden corn was bending low;
The orchard trees with fruit were bent
As if to thank God Who sent
The bountiful harvest of the year
And glorious season of good cheer.

The modest heads of the goldenrod
In the gentle breeze did nod;
Green leaves had changed to colors bright
And with the wind, were taking flight;
They fluttered by, then down they lay,
While autumn gently passed away.

And then came winter's chilling blast
With its host of snow-flakes flying fast;
Whirling 'round and 'round, they settled down
And spread a white carpet on the ground.
The merry snowbirds danced in glee
And twittered their joyful jubilee.

Just as the beautiful days of May
Changed to a golden summer day;
Just as autumn's goldenrod
Was trampled into winter's sod,
So the dead, cold days of winter change
Into the live warm days of spring.

BACK TO THE FARM

Back to the farm with all its charms,
Back to the hills and rippling rills;
Back to the woodland where children ream,
Back to that palace "Home Sweet Home."

Back to the fields with their bounteous yields.
Back to the sun, the work and fun;
And then for a ride on a load of hay
At the breezy close of an autumn day.

Back to the light of the homefires bright
And the jolly, good jokes of the old homefolks,
Where they tell the old stories Grandfather told—
Those childhood stories which never grow old.

Back for a rest at the place I love best,
Where the mind is free and the heart in glee,
Where the soul is in worship with heaven above,
At earth's holy temple of friendship and love.

A FRIENDLY HANDSHAKE AND A SMILE

When your sad heart is repining
And clouds show no silvery lining;
When your faintest hope has faded
And with gloom your life is shaded,
'Tis boosting, yea, 'tis then worth while—
Just a friendly handshake and a smile.

When the world seems to ignore you
And its door is closed before you;
When with patience you've been knocking,
You think it kind, yet somewhat shocking,
When someone meets you after while
With a friendly handshake and a smile.

When life's steps you shall have counted
And its topmost rung surmounted;
When at last fame shall have crowned you,
How noble then to look around you
And greet your booster after while
With a friendly handshake and a smile.

BE A LITTLE SUNBEAM

Be a little sunbeam, a shining ray of light,
With your smiles of gladness make this old world
bright;
Cheer someone in sorrow, stir some heart with
mirth;
Help the Savior scatter peace to all the earth.

Be a little sunbeam, drive away the night;
Brighten life's horizon with your morning light.
Though dark clouds obscure you and none your
light can view,
The clouds will break away, then all will shine
anew.

Be a little sunbeam of the heavenly sun (Son);
Shine with all your might ere life's short day is
done;
When life's light shall have faded far in the golden
west,
Let it then be said that you have done your best.

WHICH DAY WAS THE BRIGHTER?

I awoke one bright, sunny morning
And peeped through my window to view
The beautiful flowers awakened
And bathed in the sparkling dew.
But I, in my drowsiness, idled
The golden morning away,
And my heart caught no ray of sunshine—
'Twas a gloomy, dreary day.

I awoke one dark, cloudy morning
And saw, on my window pane,
That the clouds in great drops were shedding
Their tears of falling rain.
But my heart caught the tune of their patter
And danced with them in their spright—
The sun smiled out in its radiance
And life was a rainbow bright.

LIFE IS LIKENED TO:

A ROSE

'Twas beautiful and fair,
And I thought it rare,
But its piercing thorns I dreaded;
Next morning I picked
This rose,—vainly pricked
My fingers.—The petals shedded.

A MOUNTAIN

I began to climb
Life's mountain sublime
And up its steep was stepping,
When I looked far below,
Hurled a dart at my foe,
And alas! my feet were slipping.

A ROAD

I traveled life's road
With a heavy load,—
Sharp stones were wounding my feet
Till the cross I found,
Sin's burden laid down,
Then life's feeble steps became fleet.

A DAY

Life's morning, they say,
Is the brightest of day.—
While its shadows fall to the west,
Are we catching the gleams
Of the bright sunbeams?
I say, are we doing our best?

THE LAST TWILIGHT

At evening when the last twilight
Gleams o'er the western hills,
As the darkness of the gloomy night
My rugged pathway fills,
I think of the day past and gone
And oh! how sad the thought!
As memory presses to my heart
The worthless works I've wrought.

O then how I wish to recall the day
And labor for the right!
How I wish that my rugged, gloomy way
Be flooded with sunlight!
Yet I cannot recall the day past,
Nor erase the record of time;
But if the future I spend right,
'Twill make my life sublime.

At evening when life's last twilight
Gleams o'er the hills of time,
When the darkness of death's gloomy night
Hangs o'er our path with crime,
Will we have spent the day of life
In working for the right
Or, by worthless labor, will there be
No hope to give us light?

LIFE'S HILL

'Tis a hard, bitter pill
When you start up life's hill
Hand in hand with friends you confide in
And perchance you look 'round
Just as they fall down,
And you see them go downward slidin'.

'Tis a long way to go
From the valley below
To the loftiest peak of life's mountain
When you're journeying alone
Over boulder and stone
And each weary step you are countin'.

It is awfully hard
When you pathway is barred
By obstructions that boldly confront you,
And then when you try
To slyly slip by
The foe hurls his darts to daunt you.

Now here and then there
Is a fiend's fatal snare
Set for pilgrims who are not careful;
So, lest in dismay
We be snatched from the way,
Dear friend, lets' ever be prayerful.

'Tis a straight, narrow way
That leads unto day
And few there be that find it;
Though the just, through death's night;
Will climb to life's height
Where the hill throws its shadow behind it.

LIFE'S LADDER

Life's ladder we climb
To the heights sublime—
'Tis a long, long way to the top;
And it takes lots of pluck
To ever get up—
Reach higher—climb upward—don't stop.

Don't ever look down
And upon others frown
Just because they're climbing below;
But you'd better keep step
Lest your own feet should slip
And downward you tumble below.

There are others ahead
Who the same steps have led,
And upward they're climbing still;
So don't stop to count
The rungs that you mount,
But follow them up with a will.

Take your troubles and pack
Them all on your back
And start up the way with a grin ;
Just take each new task,
Like a rung, with a grasp
And when you have finished you'll win.

When life's highest aim
You shall have attained,
Pray, boost those who after you climb ;
Just give them a cheer
When they're climbing near,
'Twill make life supremely sublime.

MISSION

In some strange, mysterious way,
Controlled by Mother Nature's sway,
God with love doth bind all hearts
And to each creature grace imparts ;—
Yea, God, Who counts the sparrow's fall,
Doth in His wisdom care for all.

He maketh all to understand
The power of His mighty hand,
And by their own instinct impelled,
Are all to their own mission held.
Well may it so be understood
That God thus planned it for our good.

The little bird He taught to sing
And food unto her young ones bring;
The eagle gave He wings to fly;
The serpent in the dust doth lie;
And mankind, in God's image made,
Was cursed because he disobeyed.

God loveth all, both great and small,
And talent gave He unto all.
Though trodden underneath sin's sod,
Still is it visible to God;
And when He comes to count His gain,
No trust will He the slothful deign.

O help me, God, for Thee to live
And unto Thee my talent give,
Not for glory I may gain,
But by humility attain
A lofty vision for the soul
And, onward pressing, reach the goal.

MY PRAYER

O God, I ask not that my path
Be ever filled with light;
I only ask that Thou may'st lead
My faltering steps aright.
Nor do I ask that Thou, life's sky
From every cloud should clear;

I only ask that through the storm,
Thou, in Thy strength, be near.
Make not my burdens always light—
Teach me my cross to bear,
Thus make me able to escape
The tempter's fatal snare.
Give not to life the eagle's wings,
Nor wings of sudden flight;
But let me, step by step, surmount
The summit's lofty height.
And as I to the boulders cling,
When hope for life seems vain,
O give me courage to endure
The agony of pain.
O give me faith, my Lord, I pray,
The jagged cliffs to climb,
That upward, still, my soul may press
Toward realms of life sublime.

OUT ON LIFE'S SEA

Out on life's sea we are adrift
At chance of fate or life;
Lest our course should lie with the currents swift,
For us there is constant strife.
Though we need not fear
If aright we steer;—
Press onward, friend, be brave!

Between us and the other side
Now rolls the foaming surge.
Beware! for death's dark, fatal tide
The wrecked life doth submerge.
My friend, be wise
Lest at surprise
The billows sink thy soul.

The billows dash, the breakers roar,
And fatal seems the night;
But see! on yonder peaceful shore
Shines forth eternal light.
Press onward, soul,
Toward the goal,—
The light beams on thy way.

O courage, rise! why dost thou die
So near the blissful shore!
Sad! sad! and awful is their cry
Who sink to rise no more.
O soul, be strong!
It is not long—
The shore is just ahead.

“TIME YET”

“Time yet”, we hear the sinner say
Without a tear or sigh;
“Time yet to heed the Savior’s call;
Time yet before I die.”

The Spirit lingers, all is still—
“Time yet,” the heart doth say,
“Days still are bright, I’ll wait until
A more convenient day.”

Days glide away and years roll by,
The Savior knocks again;
“Time yet” is the sad, rejecting cry.—
Once more His pleadings wane.

The door is locked, the Savior grieves,
“Time yet”, so sad to hear!
Yet once more is His loving voice
Heard in the stubborn ear.

Still He waits with listening ears,
With a sad and thorn-crushed brow
And gently whispers, “Let Me in;
Take time to open now.”

And lingering near that dying soul,
 Oh! how it breaks His heart
To hear the words, "Time yet for me;
 O Holy One depart!"

Gently—gently, He knocks again:
 "Time yet," is still the cry;
Rejected, grieved, mocked and spurned,
 He sadly passes by.

"Time yet" is then the awful cry,
 "Time yet" has made me late;
"Time yet" has been the ruin of life
 And now leads to my fate."

WITHIN THE CELL OF SELF

O wretched heart! why dost thou slumber
 In thine iron prison cell?
Count thyself among the number
 Easing slowly down to hell?
Ah! within are shadows driven
 By the rays against thy walls;
The soul from peace hath sorrow riven,
 Its hope despondency appalls.

Break these selfish bars asunder
That Thy love, Lord, beam within;
Let me view once more with wonder
Life beyond the shades of sin:
Farther reaching, more achieving,
Heaven's beauty let me see;
Service giving, joy receiving,—
Freedom—light—eternity.

AT THE DOOR

O Spirit, why dost Thou linger
At the threshold of my heart!
With Thy knocking I am weary.
Wilt Thou not once more depart?

But oh! 'tis the self-same Stranger
Who so oft' has knocked before.
Can I still afford to slight Him,
Or shall I undo the door?

O this Friends, so kind and patient,
It gives me grief to cast away;
Yet now, O Christ, I can't confess Thee;
Depart until another day.

But another day may not be granted!
My soul, suppose this should be true?
Turn the bolt! but it is rusty;
The door, it seems, I can't undo.

Still the pierced hand is knocking,
Saddened is the thorn-crushed brow,
Touched with pity are his whispers,
But I cannot heed them now.

Knocking, knocking ; yes, still knocking
At this tightly fastened door !
Yet, once more, and He may never
Thus disturb me any more.

O how can I still reject Him !
How can I bear to grieve Him so !
Demons drive away my pity,
And so I bid the Savior go.

But hark ! again I hear Him knocking,
Once more do I hear His cry ;
Still He lingers at the threshold
And I cannot pass Him by.

Thee, O Christ, have I rejected,
Often have I spurned Thy word ;
Yet, with listening ears so patient,
Thou, my cry, hast kindly heard.

Now this bolted door I open,
Giving up the things within ;
This proud heart I now surrender—
I will let my Saviour in.

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